











A Fraternal Muslim Group to welcome Hassan Muazo Sarkin Musulmin, Sultan of Sokoto, Abdulati Bayero Emir of Kano and Usamana Emir of Gwandu

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدًا خَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ

# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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## THE NIGERIAN CHIEFS AT THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE, WOKING.

The 6th of July 1934 will long remain a memorable day in the history of the WOKING MUSLIM MISSION. It was on this day that the distinguished Muslim visitors to England from Nigeria, West Africa, the Sultan of Sokoto, the Emir of Kano and the Emir of Gwander came to the MOSQUE AT WOKING to join their Muslim brethren at their FRIDAY Prayers.

The prayers were led by Mr. W. B. Bashyr-Pickard, B.A. (Cantab). After the prayers a short address of welcome, which was translated to them in their language by their Military Attaché, was read by the Rt. Hon'ble Lord Headley (Al-Hajj Al-Farooq), which is reproduced below :—

“ We, the members of the Muslim Society of Great Britain feel greatly honoured by the visit of our distinguished brethren-in-faith from so distant a country as



West Africa. Your visit reminds us that Islam is world-wide, and has neither distinction of race, nor geographical limitations.

“Our august brethren-in-faith, here in England, we have a nucleus for the service of Islam not only to ameliorate the condition of a few of our co-religionists in this country and abroad, but also to try to dispel wrong notions about our illustrious Faith, and the person of the Holy Prophet, Muhammad, from which it has suffered so much.

“Our august brethren-in-faith, your visit to the Mosque, the Symbol of Islam in England, will always remain fresh in our memories, and we venture to hope that when you return to your own country you will not forget that there is here a fraternity at the service of Islam, and of your august selves.”

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### FRIDAY SERMON

[*Khutba* delivered by Maulvi W. B. Bashyr-Pickard on Friday, July 6th, 1934, on the occasion of the visit of the Nigerian Chiefs to the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking.—ED., I. R.]

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

And the *forms shall be breathed into*, when lo ! from their graves they shall hasten on to their Lord. And they shall say : O woe to us ! who has raised us up from our sleeping-place ? This is what the Beneficent God promised and the Apostles told the truth. There would be naught but a single cry, when lo ! they shall be brought before us. So this day no soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least ; and you shall not be rewarded aught but that which you did. Surely the dwellers of the garden shall on that day be in an occupation quite happy. They and their wives shall be in shades, reclining on raised couches. They shall have fruits therein, and they shall have whatever they desire.—Peace : a word from a Merciful Lord<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án, 36 : 51-58.

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These verses which I have just read are from the *Sura Yasin*. I think the keynote of this passage from the Qur-án will be found in the concluding verse : "*Salaam*," "Peace, a word from a Merciful Lord."

By the remembrance of God, the hearts are set at rest. For the attainment of peace some finality is requisite. The quietness and smiling pleasantness of the present moment (as of some happy summer's day, when the breeze stirs the heavy leaves with whisperings of contentment) is not enough. The heart craves something deeper. Not enough, if, after the tranquil present, the future comes onward cloudy and uncertain, filled with mystery and foreboding. The heart seeks definite assurance, security, certainty; and this sure foundation of peace is to be found in the Holy Qur-án.

Even thus : the truth is made clear in the Qur-án that God (Allah) hath power over all things. Allah hath absolute, complete, unassailable power over everything which has existed, does exist or shall exist; supremacy final over small things, over great things, over life, over death, and the Wielder of this power is the Altogether-Wise. Complete sway over everything, both inside and outside of this universe of ours, is His. But this, even this, is not enough to form a basis of true peace. Complete power in itself does not ensure peace. Something still further is necessary, and this also is to be found portrayed in the Holy Qur-án.

The second basis upon which true peace is established and secured is contained in the words "and your Lord hath endued mercy upon Himself." Your Lord is pre-eminently the Merciful, indeed the Most Merciful of the merciful ones. Now is the possibility of peace made clear and certain—perfect power united with all-embracing mercy. The judgment and award is completely in the hand of your Lord, and He is the Merciful.



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No soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least. You shall not be rewarded aught, but for that which you did. Evil deeds are punished (one cannot live even a few years of this life without becoming assured of that), but the punishment of evil is its like, that is, one punishment ; and even in this case your Lord is the Most Merciful of the merciful ones and dealeth in mercy towards those who repent and turn towards Him, those who set their faces towards their Lord humbly and press forward in good deeds.

On the other hand, in the Holy Qur-án we learn that the reward of good is tenfold. Good swalloweth up evil. For a good deed the reward persisteth, continueth, groweth. A good deed is as a goodly tree, growing, extending its branches, blossoming, fruit-bearing, stretching out into life. The reward of evil is but its like, perishing, vanishing, associated with death.

You shall not be rewarded aught, but for that which you did. We are shown by this verset a glimpse of the Attribute of God—Justice. God commandeth justice. One is not punished for the misdeeds of another. One is not rewarded for the good deeds of another. Every man's actions cling to his neck. Press forward, then, in well-doing. The good deed and the reward thereof cannot be separated ; they are so indissolubly connected as to be of the self-same substance. Yet not only this ; not only is the reward of a good deed coincident therewith, but, out of the Mercies of your Lord, the Most Merciful of the merciful ones, the reward continueth and is multiplied, even ten times, after the good action has passed down the course of time. Seek, then, that which bringeth life : avoid that which containeth the roots of death.

In all things you will find good, and in all things, likewise, you will find the possibilities of evil. Nothing in itself is absolutely good : nothing in itself is absolutely



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evil ; but all things are in accordance with the Measure, and your Lord has sent down the Measure. Pray, therefore, for the Guidance of your Lord, that you may use aright whatsoever your Lord, the Lord of Bounty and Mercy, hath created.

Let me be more explicit. Let me take a few examples. Let us consider that mighty mercy of your Lord, even water, prime source of life, without which what life can exist ? Yet by wrong use, by heedless use, by disregard of the Measure, water brings down punishment ; for water is in the supreme power of your Lord. Water obeyeth your Lord, and becomes either a source of plentiful bounty and reward, or a chastisement and an affliction.

Take again another of the bounties of your Lord, even the good food that you eat. Therein is powerful good ; therein is powerful harm. Pray for the Guidance of your Lord.

Take again the sunshine ; a smiling bounty and giver of life by the permission of your Lord, and yet again, on the other hand, the sunshine is a power that smiteth and destroyeth.

Remember, then, I ask you, that in all things there is good, and that, by following the Measure sent down by your Lord, the good in all things may be brought out and may fill your lives with countless blessings.

Remember, too, the Hadithes of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (May the Peace and the Blessings of God abide with him !) Let me quote two Hadithes upon the subject of reason :

(*First*).—God has not created anything better than reason, or anything more perfect or more beautiful than reason. The benefits which Allah gives are on its account, and understanding is by it ; and Allah's displeasure is caused by it, and by it are rewards and punishments.

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(*Second*).—Verily a man has performed prayers, fasts, charity, pilgrimage and all other good deeds ; but he will not be rewarded but in proportion to the sense he employs.

Passing on, let us remember to put the most important things first. To express my meaning more clearly, my recourse is to another Hadith of the Holy Prophet, even this : “ Verily, there is a piece of flesh in the body of man, which, when good, the whole body is good ; and when bad, the whole body is bad and beware ! that is, the HEART.” Seek, therefore, in the first place, purity of heart.

The Qur-án is the Book of Guidance. Now in reading the Qur-án for guidance, there may arise cases in modern life in certain circumstances, when the path of action is not unmistakeably clear. But, if one calls to mind the words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, then the course is made clearer, and doubts and difficulties disappear. I refer to the two further sayings of the Prophet :—

(*First*).—What is lawful is clear, and what is unlawful is clear ; but there are certain doubtful cases between the two, from which it is well to refrain.

(*Second*).—Leave what engenders misgivings, and have recourse to what is free from such reproofs of conscience.

Often two ways are open : the one, clear and unmistakeable right, containing no suspicion of wrong or error, though perhaps requiring greater effort or sacrifice on our part : the other course, possibly right but possibly wrong, doubtful and uncertain, easy, but not assuredly unmixed with the possibility of occasion of wrong or injustice. Choose by the light of the Qur-án and the Hadithes the course which engendereth no misgivings.

May the Peace and the Blessings of Allah abide with you.



## A PLEA FOR THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ÁN

### A PLEA FOR THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ÁN

(TO ENSURE WORLD PEACE, UNITY AND PROGRESS.)

*(Continued from Vol. XXII, p. 316.)*

So, what is wanted is knowledge and clearer knowledge or belief in the above principles, and the many corollaries from those principles, which are fully expounded in the Qur-án and fully exposed in the life of the Prophet. If the constant companionship of great and good men, directly or through books, is always instructive, the constant and intelligent reading of the best book, the Qur-án, and the study of the Prophet's life and his sayings, which are the best commentary on the Qur-án, must be more instructive than anything else in the world.

What was the key to the success of the Prophet in his mission? His burning zeal. It is through that burning zeal—and not through lukewarmness, catchwords and phrases, through cant, hypocrisy and platitude—that you can improve the lot of your community, the lot of India, in fact, the lot of the whole of mankind. That burning zeal can be imbibed from the life and the message of one, than whom none in the whole range of the history of mankind has been more enthusiastic and zealous for the uplift of man. Many persons, having less enthusiasm than you, must have imbibed enthusiasm from you. Contact with you must have uplifted them to a certain extent. In the same way, people who may come into contact with the most enthusiastic and the greatest known man of the world will surely be far in advance of others in the field of progress. And you cannot conceive of a greater kind of propaganda work for the uplift of India and humanity than the teachings of the Qur-án, and their commentary, the life and the sayings of Muhammad, through whom it was revealed.

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It is an incontestible fact that a frail human being cannot conceive of a better programme for the uplift of man than the one drawn up by God Himself. Your efforts for the amelioration of the condition of the people of India or of the world through conferences, congresses, leagues, Imperial conferences, Leagues of Nations, all pale into insignificance before what the Prophet did in Arabia for the Arabs and, through the Arabs, for the early Muslims, and through the early Muslims for others, with instructions from God Himself.

Do you not think, therefore, that the first duty of everyone who claims to be a Muslim, is the spread of Islamic literature throughout the length and breadth of the world, —a literature that is calculated to unite not only the whole of India but the whole of humanity into one brotherhood by putting an end to all kinds of wars and all the distinctions between man and man ; and by encouraging men to work out the potentialities lying hidden in themselves as well as those hidden in the external Nature, thus leading them to the ultimate goal of Unity and Divinity towards which the whole of creation is moving, however slowly ?

No system of philosophy, no school of thought, no book and no man, can be more enlightening, more conducive to progress and liberal-mindedness and to the unity of the whole of humanity than the Qur-ánic lore, for it is the message of the One God Himself who is the Creator, Sustainer, and Nourisher of all and Who means to unite all and enlighten all.

The world is tired of the miseries brought about by the misunderstanding by men of the purpose of their creation. It is sick of the so-called religions and the movements ostensibly devised from time to time for the good of different sections of humanity. Everywhere there is a search for the only true religion which man has, as yet, to learn, re-learn, and more thoroughly digest and assimilate.



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I am convinced that Islamic literature will, in a very short time, have accomplished in India and in the world what your leagues, congresses, conferences, councils and other political and non-political movements have failed to achieve so far. Older messages from God received through previous prophets have, in course of time, been forgotten and corrupted by the sections of humanity concerned, and superseded by a fuller and up-to-date message conveyed through the Qur-án. It is very strange, indeed, that the whole world has not yet recognized the need and the genuineness of the last Divine message when admittedly, in the past, they have always acknowledged the need of such a message and have always received it.

Nature and history bear testimony to a law of nature, *viz.*, that when a thing becomes useless by corruption or obsolete by the fact of mankind having outgrown its need, it is replaced by a more up-to-date thing, and preserved only for so long as it is needed. Here I may point out that this is due to the working of the law of evolution, for, as Tennyson put it, "the old order changeth yielding place to new." Under this law not only are old and obsolete things and institutions destroyed and replaced by better and up-to-date ones, but the corrupted and useless people who become deaf and blind to the principles of unity are also destroyed—for Nature does not require them—as other rotten things are destroyed. The very fact, however, that the Qur-án is still intact and accessible, and that no other Divine message has so far been received after it, shows that it is still needed and is, so far at least, the last and final Divine message. But the wonder is not so much that the non-Muslims do not recognize the need of the world for the Qur-án, but rather that the so-called Muslims who read the Qur-án, especially those who are more or less enamoured of reading it, do not really or fully recognize its value. On the contrary,

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many of the so-called non-Muslims, *e.g.*, the Europeans and Americans, more or less practically appreciate and follow many principles that are to be found only in the Qur-án, though these latter-day Europeans do not know that such principles were originally introduced into their race by the teachings of the Qur-án.

The Qur-án challenges the whole world to show a better message—nay, even one-half as good—for the enlightenment and uplift of humanity. Let the most learned man among mankind ransack the whole history of human literature as produced by reformers, theists, atheists, freethinkers, agnostics and humanitarians—they cannot find out therein anything even one-tenth as enlightening, liberalizing, ennobling and conducive to the good of all humanity as is the Holy Qur-án.

Please do not be misled by the pitiable plight of the so-called Muslims and the absurd, distorted beliefs of the so-called Mullas and Ulama of the present time. Islam and the so-called Muslims are poles apart. As I have said, Europeans are in some respect nearer the standard of Islam than the so-called Muslims. To properly understand Islam you may, if you will, refer to certain European scholars or to the earliest Muslim scholars and Ulama. But the best commentary on the Qur-án is supplied by the Qur-án itself, the sayings of the Prophet, and his life.

It is a pity that all of us have got disgusted with the Qur-án, nay, with everything said, written, or done in the name of any religion, and this on account of the fantastic and grotesque versions of religion given to the world by the ignorant, narrow-minded and degraded priestcraft which is so strongly denounced in the Qur-án itself. The priest has no business to come between us and our God and our religion. We do not allow any intermediary between us and the better understanding of our mundane affairs. Why should we allow



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anyone to come between us and our religion, which covers not only so-called mundane affairs, but everything which concern us in this life and the next ? When we go to school we go there to study, and we do not take our nurses or *ayas* to study for us. Those who learn their religion through priests learn nothing, and that is why we see the most strange and pitiable sight of men otherwise great and learned and occupying very high positions in life—men of letters, members of councils, high officials of Government, and leading figures of public life—behaving like ignorant and innocent children in the presence of narrow-minded, bigoted, ignorant priests, *Pirs*, *Pandas*, *Pandits* and *Padres*, who can bear no comparison with the learning and character of so-called laymen.

So, please do not run away with the idea that I am taking you back to the narrow-mindedness, superstitions and prejudices of priestcraft, which is alone responsible for religion being the most misunderstood thing in the world.

On the contrary, I am taking you to the very fountain-head of all that there is of enlightenment and progress in the world. Having once thoroughly appreciated and digested the message of Islam, you will be able to lead the whole of India, nay, the whole of the world, to the ultimate goal of unity. You are at present a leader of only a very small section of people, and you are not even sure if they will always follow your lead, and that is so because you yourself are not quite sure of the correctness of this lead you are trying to give. The moment you get the right lead yourself, from the Qur-án, you will be able to lead a larger and larger number of followers, just as the Prophet did, just as Umar and Ali did, just as the Arabs in general did. This was how the Arabs once led the whole world, but when their descendants failed to appreciate the message and asked their spiritual

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nurses, the priests, to do the thinking and learning for them, they have gradually fallen to such depths that, far from leading others, they are now not able even to follow others. And indeed, quite contrary to the example set by their ancestors, they have even refused to learn from others, say, the Europeans, who are far more advanced than themselves. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan had to coax us a great deal before we would have anything to do with English education, of which even now we are receiving only a smattering. Even Sir Syed had to study the Qur-án by himself before he could be enlightened enough to enlighten others, through his interpretation of the Qur-án, concerning the need of Muslims taking to English education and learning everything useful from every quarter. But the saddest thing that I saw at Aligarh on the occasion of the recent Jubilee was that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's Commentary on the Qur-án, and other literature of his on Islam, which alone had roused the Muslims of India so miraculously—and the Qur-án always works miracles wherever and whenever it is properly understood, as in the case of the Arabs and the European Renaissance and Reformation—are better appreciated, as they lie in the *almirahs* of the library, by the white-ants than by the Fez-wearers of Aligarh. This accounts for our decline from the ideal set up by the founder of the first College of its kind in India.

The Qur-án appeals to reason, which is the best gift from God to man ; directs man's attention to the laws of Nature, and encourages an intelligent study of them, for an intelligent study of the divine, clear and open book of Nature can alone create a real appreciation of the unity of the whole system of the Universe, and ensure the progress of humanity as a whole. In proportion to the extent of their intelligent study of the laws of Nature, men have always become united and progressive. The priest,



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in every age and country, has always asserted that there is no place for reason in matters of religion, and this the priest has done because of his ignorance and selfishness. Religion has always been his profession by which he earns his livelihood, and so there is no wonder if, like a robber in a railway train, he attacks his victim's faculty of understanding by administering to him a dose of some intoxicant before he puts his hands in the pockets of his unconscious victim. The layman when it is constantly dinned into his ears that a man's reason is a most unreliable thing, soon ceases to be a reasonable being, with the result that he does not study the laws of Nature which alone can lead to unity and progress. The general stagnation that thus follows results in wars and disorder, and thus you see the real religion as taught by God and the so-called religion as taught by priestcraft lead to entirely different consequences—the one to heaven and the other to perdition. The God of the priestcraft of the so-called religions is a sectarian, conservative and reactionary God, who sets people by the ears, and thus brings them to stagnation and destruction, while the God of the Qur-án is the cosmopolitan God, the God of all, and therefore interested in uniting all and in the progress of all. The One God of the Qur-án says: "They say, None shall enter paradise except such as are Jews or Christians. That is their fancy. Say thou, Bring your proofs, if ye speak the truth. Nay, whoso submits himself to God (laws of Nature) and is a doer of good, he shall have his reward with his Lord; there shall come no fear on them, nor shall they grieve." At another place: "Verily, those who say, Our Lord is God, and then keep straight—there shall come no fear on them, nor shall they grieve;—these are the people of paradise, to dwell therein for ever, as a reward for what they have done." Again, "Verily, those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians and the Sabaeans—whoso believes in

God and in the last day, and does good—they have their reward with their Lord : and there shall come no fear on them, nor shall they grieve.” Again, “ Ye people, verily, We have created you of a male and a female, and have made you races and tribes, that ye may know one another : but verily the most honourable of you in the sight of God is he who most fears to do evil.” Do not even these few quotations show unmistakeably that the God of the Qur-án is neither sectarian, nor reactionary, nor conservative ; nor does He care at all for formalities and dogmas. God is the Creator, Sustainer and Nourisher of all, and desires to bring about Universal Brotherhood and the progress of humanity as a whole. The defect of the present civilized age, and of the most progressive countries and peoples of the West is that they still fall short of the true ideal of the unity of God and the brotherhood of man. Unless you believe in the good of the whole of humanity all at once, you cannot be sure of your continued welfare and progress. You may fall any moment. Just as in the past, great nations and mighty civilizations have been swept away by the working of the laws of Nature, simply because they did not believe in the good of humanity as a whole, so at any moment you may hear of the fall of any nation. Recently some of the greatest empires of the world have crumbled to dust, and that simply because they would not recognize the one truth of Unity, and ignored the laws of Nature. I may here adduce the instance of Austria, which as a Catholic country believed least in the Unity of mankind and suffered most in the last war, while Germany, as a Lutheran, was nearer Islam and suffered less.

*(To be continued)*

“ THE MENACE OF ISLAM ”

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

*Islam on the Background of Christian Supremacy.*

Christianity had already attained an imperial position when Islam appeared on the scene. Addressing itself primarily to a nation having no historical past and no conception of the elementary principles of ordered social life, it was able, even before the death of its founder, to lay the foundation of a new national life broadbased on the principles of equality, fraternity and justice. Nevertheless, when the Prophet Muhammad breathed his last, the Arab Muslim nation was yet in its infancy, and scarcely able to maintain itself ; but even at that early stage, ere yet the political power of Islam had become a thing to frighten the outside world, the Holy Christian Empire was feeling restless with ominous forebodings on its account. It tried to nip the evil in the bud, but the Prophet's alertness gave a timely check to that pious intention. The Tabuk expedition, undertaken by the Prophet was, therefore, significant in so far as it indicated Christian apprehensions at the rise of Islam.

*The turning of the tables.*

But God fulfils Himself in many ways. Islam prospered, and that simultaneously and in all directions ; Christian supremacy had gradually to recede before the advancing Islam, and a time came when Muslims were the important persons everywhere and in everything that counted in the world. So the Christian fears proved to be only too well-founded, for with all the advantages of an imperial position Christendom could do nothing to check the progress of the Muslim political conquests. In spite of the proud legacies of Greece and Rome they failed miserably in competing with the Muslims



in the fields of culture and learning, administration and statesmanship. We can imagine the heart-burnings which the pious Christians of that time must have felt to see their Father in Heaven behaving so unwisely in the distribution of His gifts. It was, indeed, a great enigma to them that the followers of the *False Prophet* should be exhibiting a higher morality and a greater charity than those whom God had come to redeem from Sin by His own blood.

## *A Sustained struggle and Christian victory.*

The Christians. to their credit it must be said, resisted this avalanche of Muslim progress, and put up a good fight, hotly contesting every inch which they had to yield, the Sermon on the Mount notwithstanding; and when this failed they ascribed their failure to the machinations of the Devil. The Devil, however, must have his due. So the Pope declared a Holy Crusade against the Mohammadans in spite of Jesus the Christ's exhortations to the contrary. When this also came to nothing and in consequence people's faith in Christianity began to weaken the successors of St. Peter, to whom it will be remembered, were allotted the Keys of Heaven, resorted to calumny and the vilification of Muhammad and his religion, and such a process actually succeeded where other and franker methods had failed. But the course of the years had brought about deterioration in the character and outlook of the Muslims, and these two factors combined to swing the pendulum to the Christian side. Islam was forced to recede as Christendom showed signs of an awakened life.

A strange return. But the retreat of the Muslims, unlike that of the Christians, was a tragic process since undue advantage was taken of their fall by the people of the opposite camp, and though the Muslims had all along referred to their adversaries by the honourable title of "the people of the Book," they were in return execrated as "Infidels." Though friendliness, goodwill and

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co-operation had ever been their guiding principles in dealing with Christian peoples ; they were, now that evil days had befallen them, treated with cruelty by the latter and greeted with treachery. A strange compliance with the behest of the Master—" Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you."

Thus a time was when Islam became a faint glimmer of a reforming movement, looking ridiculously insignificant against the majestic power of the Christian Empire. From this lowly condition it rose to be the moral and material overlord of Christendom and of the rest of the world. But it fell, and lay so degraded and humiliated before Christianity that for the past two centuries it was inconceivable to an average man that Islam could ever at any time compete with Christianity in the race of life. Circumstances have varied greatly in their relations to Islam and Christianity. But the most remarkable phenomenon in this connection is that Christian minds have at none of these stages been free from the bogey of Islam. They are as scared of Islam now when it is living, so to say, on sufferance as when it reigned supreme in the world, and of this panic (for such we may almost term it) a tangible proof was afforded in the Great War, when the leading politicians of the Allied powers sought to seize this opportunity for removing the last vestige of Muslim political power from the soil of Europe, and made no secret of this intention. The capture of Constantinople by the Allied army was, in fact, the last political blow dealt by Christianity to Islam, and to all appearance quite a successful one.

*God disposes.*

Nevertheless, man proposes, but God disposes ; and thus while Christianity was planning a death blow to Muslim political power, thinking that power to be the

only obstacle in the way of its progress, human nature was itself pronouncing its verdict on the defeat of Christianity. The louder the braggings of Christianity and the greater the flourishings of the Christian sword, the more pronounced became this verdict—a verdict expressed in the concrete facts of world history.

Thus, if on the one hand, America gave the lie to the claims of love as advanced by Christianity by its conduct towards the Negroes, the spread of Christianity in Africa appeared more impossible after the fall of Turkey and the decay of Muslim political power the world over even than it had before. Nay, the falsity of the Christian brotherhood has since been exposed in all its hideousness everywhere in the world where men's skins are not "white." Facts are, indeed, stranger than fiction. Taking its birth in an Eastern land and in a person belonging to a dark nation, it was Christianity of all the religions of the world that proved a salubrious field for a growth of colour and race prejudice unprecedented in history. And the Great War and the subsequent political wranglings have proved to the world at large that Christianity cannot form a bond of unity even between the White races.

*Christianity v. Hinduism.*—The sad fate of Christianity, however, has reached its extreme in India. Here a *Hindu leader*—Mahatma Gandhi—was waited upon by a band of *Christian untouchables* in the course of his recent tours in connection with his anti-untouchability movement. These *Christian untouchables* were assured by the Mahatma that his movement would succeed in the long run in ameliorating their condition too. In this connection it is well to remember that the Mahatma's movement for the reclamation of the untouchables is purely based on Hindus' patriotic feelings. As appeared from his announcement some time ago, he has no patience with Christianity or its propagandists. In a self-governing India, the Mahatma had declared, there would be no room



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for Christian missionaries carrying on their proselytising work ; so no Christian has any ground for supposing that the work of the Mahatma will be a further manifestation of the spirit of Christ. If the Christian untouchables are reclaimed at all, they will be reclaimed by an exclusive Hinduism that will be an avowed enemy of Christianity and anything that it can stand for.

### *The Dark Continent.*

Apropos of missionaries and their activities, an Australian paper gives us an interesting piece of news. It is as follows :—

“Addressing bendigo businessmen last week on the Menace of Islam, K. R. Wale, Chief Secretary of the Sudan United Mission, said *it was only a matter of time before Central Africa would be won to Mahometanism.*

“The British Government realised the difficulties which would arise if the twenty or thirty million pagan Sudanese became Muslims. It had appealed to the Sudan United Mission to extend its work, and had opened doors to the Mission, which unfortunately it could not enter, because of the lack of support from the Christian churches at home. *Mahometanism was now definitely increasing, and there was need for haste if the Sudanese were to be saved from the Moslem.*” (The italics are ours.)

So the menace of Islam is staring Christianity in the face as much to-day as ever it has. It has not weakened, as was expected by the Christians, in proportion to the fall of the Muslims, and the Dark Continent, which was considered the most promising field for evangelical activities, has been protesting all the more vehemently against the proposal of accepting Christianity as its faith. All this may be perplexing to the Christian missionaries, but it is not so to us.

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### *Church and State in Christendom.*

What does perplex us, however, is the anxiety of the British Government in this connection. It is certain that no Muslim State has anything to do with the failure of Christianity and the corresponding success of the Islamic faith in the continent of Africa.

So, from the point of view of political justice the Christian Governments ought to have maintained a supreme indifference in the matter. But we are told, on the authority of a responsible Church leader, that the Government authorities of the Sudan have actually felt restless on this account, and have been actively arousing the Christian missionaries working in that country to more vigorous action. So the religious beliefs of a particular people are not a matter of private concern with these authorities, as we have been given to understand so far, but are, on the contrary, in their opinion fraught with deep political problems. As a necessary corollary, it follows that the conversion of a people to Christianity must be regarded as a political achievement by the European Governments, who are, at the same time, never tired of congratulating themselves on their wisdom in having separated the Church from the State. Strange are the ways of God. But stranger are the ways of our Western politicians. We know there is not much love lost between the Church and the State at home, so that this cordiality between the two abroad would appear something of a paradox. It would almost seem that faithfulness to White sentiment alone makes this combination possible—a sentiment, having its origin in that Imperialism and pride of race domination that rules in the West, rules equally the minds of their leaders, secular and spiritual. There is nothing to wonder at in this. The Christian Church has never been inspired with the ideals of Jesus. Whether Catholic or Protestant, pomp, grandeur and worldly gain have always been its ruling passion.

## **"THE MENACE OF ISLAM"**

Always it has arrogated to itself political and administrative powers to the detriment of National welfare. The Papacy held supreme sway over the affairs of Christendom for centuries ; of course, to the detriment of popular welfare. Since, however, popular imagination was awakened through contact with the Muslims of Spain, there has been a general sense of protest in the minds of men, indeed the Protestant movement was only a virulent form. The power of the Papacy was shaken but could not be crushed altogether. probably more than one Mussolini would be necessary to such an end. But while the Church's passion for political domination was receiving these blows from lay sources at home, a new outlet for it appeared in another direction, in the form of the political expansion of Europe. Shorn of its supremacy at home, it was content this time to act as the hireling of the temporal authorities. If it could not itself exploit, it had the melancholy satisfaction of being the instrument of exploitation. That the Christian missionaries have actually acted as the vanguard of European political conquests is too open a secret nowadays to require any verification. The occasional utterances of Mission authorities themselves bear eloquent testimony to the fact ; and the utterances under discussion afford an additional proof thereof.

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## **OUR NEXT NUMBER**

As usual, owing to the month of Ramadhan, our next issue will be double-number for the months of November and December 1934.

We have the pleasure to announce that the Board of Editors have decided to devote this number to the life of The Holy Prophet.



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### RELIGION

BY FAZL-UL-KARIM, PANAMA.

Religion, properly defined, should indicate some means and methods of raising debased humanity from the abyss of corruption to perfection, moral and spiritual. If it fails to contribute to a greater extent towards the eradication of every evil tendency that darkens human nature, or is found wanting in its aim of moulding our passions into divine morals, in creating a cosmic consciousness within us, in raising human consciousness from the animal to the Divine, and ultimately in uniting all the nationalities of the world in one bond of brotherhood, irrespective of caste, creed and colour, then the necessity for its existence will not be so keenly felt.

Religion with all the inestimable blessings which it has brought to mankind is, as yet, neglected, even ignored and sufficient efforts have not been made to bring the world to realise its true significance. We are lacking in the virtues of unbiased thinking and honest judgment, and this is the reason why we are still faced with the existence of so many religions, each claiming Divine origin, while denying the same privilege to others. This exclusiveness as manifested in thus limiting the Divine revelations to one particular nation, place or clime, breeds in the mind feelings of hatred and intolerance, and separates instead of uniting us and establishing the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. If the human brain cannot evolve a plan that will unify the feelings of all the nations of the world professing different religions, it is due only to the absence of omniscience in man; and Divine revelations, or what we call revealed religion, should come to the rescue where the human brain is thus at fault.

In all our worldly affairs we utilise to the full our common sense and intelligence—the Divine gift that is

## RELIGION

always present in man; we rationalise the subjects of importance, and establish a reason for our decisions before we act upon them. Reason then, it would seem, plays the most important part in the affairs of our life, it is reason in fact that distinguishes man from animal—in worldly as well as in religious matters. We must in the latter case also be guided in all our actions by reason and commonsense. Our religious belief must be confirmed by reason and corroborated by the progressive march of science and of human experience. Mystery and dogma, if allowed to outweigh the experiences accumulated by successive generations in the field of science, will certainly work infinite harm for mankind inasmuch as the scientific mind, in the absence of a sense of true theology, will become atheist. To avoid such a disaster we must see that religious verities do not clash with scientific truths. Belief in such religious verities as are not borne out by natural theology is a slur on the omniscience of God, which is universally accepted as one of His principal attributes.

“BELIEVE IN WHAT WE BELIEVE, OR YE SHALL BE DAMNED.”

While discussing this subject of the exclusiveness of the Divine Revelation, we must bear in mind God's physical dispensations such as heat, light and air. These are equally shared by every individual denizen of His earth, and just as His physical dispensations are vouchsafed to all of us equally for our physical nourishment, so His spiritual dispensations must come equally to every nation of the earth. Belief in the unity of God broadens our belief in the equality of man and the subservience of nature—“And we have sent religion to every nation on the earth.” The significance of religion has not been clearly explained so far, nor has any attempt been made to apply it practically to everyday life in order to make it adaptable

to the various spheres of life. Religion should mean, if it means anything : “ The principles and laws of moral and spiritual evolution in man. ”

So Divine revelations as embodying the principles and laws aforesaid applicable to our worldly life constitute what we call religion. It does not, therefore, run counter to the natural intelligence of man to believe in the necessity of following such laws and principles as the indispensable religion of mankind. Obedience to such laws as have been revealed from time to time for our moral and spiritual evolution, is the only religion for all time. It is not Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity, Mohammadanism, or Zoroastrianism that constitutes the true religion, but obedience to the laws of our moral and spiritual evolution.

The epithet “ Islam ” given to the religion upheld by the Qur-án means nothing but “ obedience to Law. ” Our belief in obedience to the laws and principles of moral and spiritual evolution as our “ religion ” and as the basis of our salvation, is the only great incentive to human action. Such belief, based, as it is, on obedience to law, will work out our physical, moral, spiritual as well as social advancement. The question after all is not one of belief but of obedience. Divine revelations must convey to us laws for such evolution on our part as aforesaid. All these principles and laws are not human but Divine ; their merit is unquestionable, but obedience to such laws will most surely set us on the way to peace and progress. It is clear, then, that religion is a great factor in furthering the cause of progress and civilisation.

The attribute of God (Allah) as Evolver, as given in the last book of God, is of profound significance. He is styled “ Rabb-ul-Alamin. ” The word ‘ Rabb ’ gives the sense not only of “ Creator ” and “ Nourisher ” but also of the Evolver of things from the crudest to the



## RELIGION

most highly developed state. If we meditate upon a large tree standing before our eyes, we realise the extent of the evolutionary journey it has accomplished from a seedling up to its present condition. The same process we find in our physical evolution from a piece of flesh in the mother's womb to full manhood. The Author who causes these evolutions has been rightly termed in the Qur-án "Rabb-ul-Alamin," the Creator and Evolver of this worlds. It is in the exercise of this capacity that Allah (God) sent from time to time, and through His various Prophets, the principles and laws that would evolve our morality and spirituality to the highest standard of perfection.

To attain to ability evolving both morally and spiritually is not a mere dream, but a reality as demonstrated in the lives of the Prophets of old—a reality, again, attainable through obedience to His laws. Manifestations of such attainments glorify, even in these days, the exemplary lives of the past prophets (May their souls rest in peace) who lived and breathed in Divine morals. The reflection of Divine morals on our daily life is the only commendable object of religion. The one and only source of true progress in evolution lies in our obedience to His laws.

Man is a rational animal, yet he tends to believe irrationally. This is deplorable, as is also the fact that he regards such belief as the basis of his salvation. It is surprising that while his own idea about God is at variance with his own conception of religion, which naturally should be "obedience to laws and principles of moral and spiritual evolution," he should persist in holding to this belief. It is only with whole-hearted obedience to His laws and principles as revealed to Abraham, Moses, Jesus and lastly, to Muhammad (Peace be on their souls) will the real islamisation of human life begun.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### CORRESPONDENCE

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman, ir-Raheem, Ial-ilaha-il-Allaho  
Muhammad-ur-Rasool Allah.*

TO THE IMAM,  
WOKING.  
DEAR BROTHER-IN-ISLAM,

*Assalamo-alaikum,*

Here in Australia where it is rare to come in general contact with anyone of the Muslim faith, I consider myself extremely lucky when I met Mahomed Allum—Herbalist—"Wonder Man" and healer as he has been named by the people in Australia whom he has cured.

I was brought up in Lutheran Church, where I was christened, and when 14 years of age I was confirmed by a bishop of the Church of England, and at the age of 22 I was baptised in the Church of Christ and sang in the choir for two years. I thought this would save me, but after a while this seemed absolutely ridiculous. I became so disgusted that I gave up going to the Church altogether. My friends thought that I was doing wrong, but I knew all the time that the real thing in my life was missing.

I can see quite plainly now how Mohammad (peace of Allah be upon him) was God's last Messenger and Holy Prophet, and that Christianity has not proceeded further than the time of Jesus Christ.

Practically all my acquaintances laugh at me for accepting Islam as my religion. They may laugh as much as they like. In my heart I know that I am on the right path when I serve the One and only God in the right way—as He meant us to. What do I care about being jeered at?

I am proud and thankful to be a Muslim. My faith in Allah shall never be shattered. May Allah be praised—

I enjoy reading the *Islamic Review*.

Some day I hope to visit the Shah Jehan Mosque and meet you personally. You are a great worker for Islam.

I wish the Muslim Mission all the success it deserves.

I remain,  
Your Sister-in-Islam,  
HALIMA SCHWERDT.

ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

TO THE EDITOR,  
THE "ISLAMIC REVIEW,"  
WOKING.  
DEAR BROTHER,

It is with great pleasure I lift my pen to tell you how I came to adopt Islam. For years I have found the so-called modern Christianity inadequate. Being a member of the Church of England

[Miss Halima's Photo appeared in *I. R.* for August, 1934. *E. I. R.*]

## TWENTY YEARS AGO

—a Religion of Sacraments and all formalities and no reality—one day I denounced modern Christianity to a friend. He gave me the *Islamic Review*, and other Muslim literature. Ever since my adopting Islam for my faith, I am a new man, with a new outlook on life. I feel like a man who has been blind, and has had his sight restored, as if a veil had been removed from my eyes. At last I have found the true Religion, a thing for which I had a long time been searching, through Mahomet Allum and Effie Schwerdt—two good Muslims who are in Australia at present. I have been able to get literature on Islam. They are always willing to enlighten me on any subject. The purity and simplicity of the Mohammadan religion, and its freedom from dogma is very beautiful.

I hope to become a good Muslim by the help of God.

Your Brother-in-Islam,

ADELAIDE (S. AUSTRALIA).

(Signed) HARRY BADGER.

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## TWENTY YEARS AGO<sup>1</sup>

ISLAMIC REVIEW.—It cannot fail to arouse interest in many to read what we quote in the following in this connection from the introduction to that most remarkable book, "The Rise of Christendom," in which Edwin Johnson, M.A., the author of the book, traces most of the current Christian theology to a Muslim origin. His words, given below, have after all proved prophetic, and an occasion has arisen for a thinking Westerner to learn of a religion, so grossly misrepresented hitherto, which can exactly suit his matter-of-fact, business-like temperament. We wish our readers in the West would ruminate on what the author puts before them in the following quotation:—

"I have looked with interest on the first mosque that has been built on English ground. Our Mohammadan friends may desire to learn something of us, but it is we who have to learn from them in respect to the great Mediæval tradition. They are the masters of it, they are of the orthodox Church; their's is the sublime theology and the inflexible logic. We owe it to the common civility of the great Empire to which we belong to endeavour to correct the vulgar fables which have prevailed since the fourteenth century in respect of their religion, and to desist from affronting them with what they must ever regard as a corrupt version of their own sacred legends. We need no more controversy, but mutual intelligence. And should a genuine study of Oriental systems be destined to flourish in the West, it will be a means of promoting that truly catholic and all tolerant sentiment which is suitable to the British no less than to the Roman Empire.'

1. *Islamic Review*, October 1914.



## THE HOLY QUR-ÁN AND ITS COMMENTARY

BY THE LATE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

*(Continued from Vol. XXII, p. 238.)*

V. 93. I have already shown what is meant by the mountain being made to stand above them, but let me repeat it. It simply means that they were at the foot of a mountain, and that, naturally, the mountain was towering high above their heads. From what we read in the 32nd chapter of Exodus it is clear that these people were extremely prone to Devil-worship, and it was this obsession which was responsible for the making of the golden calf. Although they professed a faith in the One Invisible God, their hearts were inclined to the worship of a god made with hands. In other words, idol-worship had become an essential feature of their character, so much so that even while they listened to the commandment of God, in their hearts they were thinking of honouring that commandment rather in the breach than the observance, and it is this fact which the Qur-án discloses in its use of the phrase "Asaina"—"We disobey."

V. 94. These Jews also believed that the after life was a monopoly of their own, and that none but themselves would enter paradise. Now if the life to come be so far more desirable than the life on earth, as they also believe, with others, surely they should be eager to depart from this inferior existence as soon as may be. By way of rebuttal, the Qur-án puts forward the argument that if they actually believe what they profess, and are right in doing so, why do they not long for death?

V. 95. But the Qur-án, aware of their inward nature, says that it is impossible for them to entertain any such desire. The good or ill of the life to come depends on the nature of a man's actions in this life, and these people

## THE HOLY QUR'ÂN AND ITS COMMENTARY

know their own misdeeds full well and consequently know also that they will not be entitled to any measure of happiness in that other life; which being so, it is altogether out of the question that they should cherish any desire for death. It is a pity that they do not realise the fact that God is aware of the misdeeds of wrong-doers.

V. 96. Far from cherishing any preference for death, their desire for the continuance of the earthly life is so intense that they surpass all other nations of the earth in this particular passion. Indeed, compared with their's the love of the things of this world common among polytheists dwindles into insignificance. A people, believing in a revealed scripture, and having faith in God and the hereafter, may be expected to be somewhat indifferent towards this life, and comparatively fearless in respect of death; whereas a polytheist or a materialist should, in the nature of things, go in fear of death, seeing that to him it means the end of all things. But in the case of such Jews as these, human expectations are baffled, and the followers of the Book are found to be even more covetous of a long life on this earth than are the worshippers of many gods or none. They fail to perceive that even the longest life on earth will not avail to free a man from the consequences of his actions, and that God will ultimately take full account of their misdeeds. Here the adjective used in connection with God is "Basîr" which is generally translated as "seeing." "Basîr" is one who sees not only the things that are in sight, but also those that do not come within the range of mortal vision. In other words, "Basîr" sees both the disclosed and the hidden. "Basîrat" not only indicates the faculty of sight, but also the power of observation which looks to the why and wherefor of things, within which is included experience and the lessons to be drawn from it. When God is spoken of as "Basîr" with regard to the actions of men, it is not only meant that He sees them, but that He

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

is aware of the motives behind them. He knows full well what is intended by a particular action of a particular man, and what its result will be. All this is included in the meaning of the word "Basīr."

### SECTION 12.

V. 97. The revelation that came to Muhammad was through an angel of God named Jibrāil (Gabriel). The word, like Mikāil (Michael) in the next verse, is of Arabic origin, being derived from *jabr* and *il*, meaning "servant" and "Allah," respectively. Similarly, Mikāil comes from *Mik*, i.e., servant and *il* meaning Allah. But the enmity of the Jews against Muhammad passed all limits; and they even began to hate Gabriel as well, simply because he was sent to reveal to Muhammad that he was the Prophet foretold in the Book of Deuteronomy, while they did not trouble themselves to understand the nature of the message. In the first place, this message confirmed the statements of their own Books, and in the second, the message which the angel brought contained both a gospel and teachings for the guidance of men. It declared that a surer punishment was awaiting the Jews, but that if they mended their ways they might yet obtain an ample reward. It brought good tidings for them, and contained nothing that should have excited their malice. The word "guidance," the main object of the revelation of the Qur-án, is pregnant with a mighty truth, concerning not the Jews only but other races also who look askance at the Qur-án. If the injunctions in the Qur-án do really put us on the straight path and show us the way to lead a godly life why should anyone be opposed to it? The Qur-án does not deal in fairy tales. Let this be the test of its truth. People need not go so far as to embrace Islam, but they can at least accept the Qur-án as truth, if its teachings provide true guidance.



## THE HOLY QUR-ÂN AND ITS COMMENTARY

*Huda* means that particular guidance which makes him who adopts it successful in his worldly affairs. Every man is desirous of succeeding in life. A single wrong step at times may mean ruin, or disaster in a greater or less degree. We are earnestly in search of a way to success, which is, in the Arabic language, called *hudan*. Now if any Book contains injunctions with regard to this way to success, no reasonable man could possibly go against it. The Holy Qur-ân has emphasised this one truth on many occasions in proving its claim. To whatever religious denomination a man may belong, he will still be seeking for this guide to success. There can be no better test for the truth of a Book than that it should, keeping in view the various occupations and activities of man, do full justice to all of these in its instructions. It is possible that the scripture of a particular religious community contains certain instructions that throw light on certain human activities, but it will be found, on comparison, that a comprehensive dealing with all of them is the achievement of the Qur-ân alone. If so, how can one cavil at the teachings of this Book? It is a mighty proof which the Qur-ân has put forward in vindicating its claims—this question of *huda* or a guide to success. It is, so to say, the supreme miracle of the Book, comprising in its significance the thousands of its other miracles—a miracle, above all, which is of vital necessity to our everyday life. It is this argument which we shall find repeated in another way in verse 99.

V. 98. The various angels of God are different functionaries appointed by God to make clear His will for our benefit. Those, therefore, who would go against any angel are, as a matter of fact, not the enemies of that particular angel, or of the angels in general, but of God, seeing that they are opposing themselves to His beneficent will, and thereby forfeiting His grace and

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blessings. This is what is meant by God becoming their enemy, for it is, after all, only through His angels that God showers his blessings on man.

V. 99. Here it is stated that the Qur-án contains within itself clear signs of its claims to give guidance. Nevertheless, the transgressors and those who would forsake the right way, would have none of it. I have several times emphasised this point that if Divine revelation has any function, it is to guide mankind to the right way and to save it from destruction. Any teaching on these lines is in itself a great sign. In certain books, for which revelation from God is claimed, there are teachings that go counter to the interest and welfare of mankind. Such books do not help the fulfilment of the object of human life; and the great proof as to a Book being from God, is that it should clearly expose the purpose of man's birth into this world. Nevertheless, the breakers of Divine laws are unable to appreciate or accept the propositions of a Book that puts forward such a clear argument.

V. 100. Indeed, there are many among the Jews, who, in effect, will make a covenant with God on a certain occasion, which is broken as soon as made, because the majority of them have no faith in the Divine words.

V. 101. When their Book did contain a prophecy concerning some great prophet, and when there came before them a claimant to that same prophethood, in circumstances and conditions corresponding in all respects with those set forth in the prophecy, their rejection of him was tantamount to the rejection of their own Book.

They were acting as if they had never heard of these circumstances and conditions. The least they could have done would have been to ponder over the arguments advanced by the claimant, or examine the teachings propounded by him. But no. They made certain strange things pass for Religion instead.

## THE HOLY QUR-ÁN AND ITS COMMENTARY

V. 102. For example, they thought that the secret of Solomon's power and glory lay in his skill in magical charms and incantations. They also believed that in a certain well at Babel, there were suspended two angels with their heads downwards as a punishment for some grave crime ; that these two used to teach sorcery to men, and that they would remonstrate with those who would try to approach them. In the same way they were wont, in the name of Religion, to indulge in other practices in which they would not allow their womenfolk to take part. With these, they believed, they were able to bring harm on others. The Holy Qur-án, however, will have none of these mischievous notions, for first it says, there is no truth in sorcery, and, secondly, to ascribe this sorcery to the Prophet Solomon, or to the two angels, is nonsense. Why then, it may be asked, does the Qur-án refer to these stories at all ? The reply is that its purpose is to show to what depth of degradation in the matter of religious belief the Jews had sunk in the days of the Holy Prophet.

V. 103.—How much better would it have been for them, if they had renounced all these baneful beliefs and practices, and had accepted instead lofty principles of life and had acted upon them, for only by so doing could they be saved from the disastrous results of their actions.

As usual these last two verses throw light on more things than one. Apart from the charge of sorcery, there were certain other accusations made against Solomon, some of them imputing to him the sin of unbelief. These charges were framed by no less authorities than the writers of the Old Testament, and one of them was that the Prophet Solomon had been so much under the influence of his wives that his own heart had become inclined towards idols<sup>1</sup> with a resultant indifference towards God.<sup>2</sup> Such an

<sup>1</sup> Kings I, 11 : 14.

<sup>2</sup> Kings I, 11 : 9.



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

allegation is not only rejected by the Holy Qur-án but also disproved by the researches of modern scholarship. True, the harem of Solomon contained non-Israelite women, but it is wrong to allege that he was either indifferent towards his God, or that he built temples for idol-worship at one under their influence. The Holy Qur-án by denying that Solomon ever manifested any unbelief, disposes, at one stroke, of all the allegations against that great Prophet.

What we term sorcery is called in Arabic *sihr*. This language is so expressive and philosophical in its vocabulary that the word used in it for a particular thing will express even the real nature of that thing, a fact, which is, in itself, a proof that the language is of God. The particular word *sihr*, according to *Taj-ul-Arus*, signifies the changing of the original appearance of a thing to make it resemble something else. Lane, also, supports this meaning in his Arabic Lexicon. The idea is that the thing itself will not change, but will appear in a different form. Now this meaning expounds the reality of *sihr* or magic. Whether call it mesmerism or the secret powers of will-force, the fact is that no one can change the reality of anything through these processes. The rods of the sorcerers might have appeared to change into serpents, but they remained none the less rods and only seemed to the onlookers to be serpents, under the influence of hypnotism. Now, although the word *sihr* is used in a bad sense nowadays, it has its use in a good sense as well. The Holy Prophet, for example, has spoken of the gift of eloquence as *sihr*. To be brief, *sihr* signifies the changing of a thing in its outward appearance and not in its inward nature; and if that change is brought about by a good man for a good purpose, no harm is done. According to Imam Ghazzali, the prophet and the magician perform the same sort of work so far as the nature of it is concerned.

## THE HOLY QUR-ÁN AND ITS COMMENTARY

But, having regard to their respective motives and teachings, if we call the one Prophet, to the other we must give the name, magician. But we must not forget that the word *sihr* is not a new word, nor is this particular meaning attached to it a new one. From the very beginning it has always indicated an action which changes the appearance of anything. It is as a result of modern investigations that we come to know that the reality behind the magic is nothing else but this. One who had used this word *sihr* to express the idea of magic in the days of ignorance, must have been aware of the reality of magic even in those days. But herein is no peculiarity of this particular word; every other word of the Arabic language carries with it similar deep significances, and in face of this, is it too much to ascribe the formation of the language to God who alone knows the realities of the things mostly hidden from our knowledge?

There is one other question which demands our attention in the discussion of this verse, that is to say, the exclusion of women from participation in certain activities of the Jews, which aimed at bringing harm to their enemies. Some think that the reference here is to the Society of Freemasons, and this is not improbable. It is a fact that the Freemasons do not permit women to take part in their ceremonies; it is also true that they think they can cause harm to their enemies, and there is a strong presumption in favour of the existence of an active Society of Freemasons in the days of the Prophet Solomon. It is, moreover, an admitted fact that the origin of this society goes back to very early times. There are other commentators, again, who think that the reference is to the plots which the Jews had been hatching for the murder of the Holy Prophet.

*(To be continued)*

## REVIEW

*Pilgrimage to Mecca*, by Lady Evelyn Cobbold. Price sh. 10/6, pp. xix, 260 ;  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$  (Murray, London).

To our readers Lady Evelyn Cobbold is not unknown. She is a great traveller and has a keen observant mind. Last year she went to Mecca to perform the pious and meritorious duty of pilgrimage incumbent upon every well-to-do Muslim man and woman. It is her impressions of this journey that she has now given us in her recent book under review. Besides being an interesting travel book, the book has a unique feature of its own which one does not find in books written by her forerunners on Mecca and the Pilgrimage. She writes as a devout Muslim ought to. Not only this, she more often than not quite fearlessly throughout her book fights for Islam and its teachings. Some of the old misconceptions about Islam rampant in Europe have been ably refuted, and from our viewpoint it is in this that the real value of this book lies.

In her introduction she describes her little encounter while a child with the Pope who asked her if she was a Catholic. His Holiness must have been shocked to hear the reply she made : " I am a Muslim," she said. One is reminded of the well-known saying of the holy Prophet : " Every child is born in the religion of Islam. It is the parents of the child who make him a Magian, Jew or Christian." She lays stress on the fact, whose importance cannot well be over-emphasised that Islam is a religion of practice. " Everywhere in the Koran to believe is to do good. To believe and not do good cannot exist in Islam." The book deals with the life of Arabia, especially that of Mecca and Medina, during the days of pilgrimage in a manner that is at once fascinating and intimate.

We strongly recommend this book to all those who are anxious not only to have a glimpse of the convert to Islam, but also a memorable portrayal of the customs and ways of life in Arabia under King Ibn Saud.

Pilgrimage to Mecca has a foreword by His Excellency Sheikh Wahba Saudi, Arabian Minister in London, and is well illustrated.

M. A. M.



## WHAT IS ISLAM ?

## WHAT IS ISLAM ?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.]

**ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.**—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission; as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

**OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.**—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

**THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.**—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, is however, the last of the Prophets. Muslims, *i.e.*, the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's Prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

**THE QUR-AN.**—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

**ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.**—These are seven in number: belief in (1) Allah; (2) Angels; (3) Books from God; (4) Messengers from God; (5) the Hereafter; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

**PILLARS OF ISLAM.**—These are five in number: (1) Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) Prayer; (3) Fasting; (4) Almsgiving; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

**ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.**—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of All the

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Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

**FAITH AND ACTION.**—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

**ETHICS OF ISLAM.**—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

**CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.**—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

**THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.**—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

**EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.**—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

**PERSONAL JUDGMENT.**—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

**KNOWLEDGE.**—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

**SANCTITY OF LABOUR.**—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

**CHARITY.**—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.



## ZAKAT

## ZAKAT

BISMILLAH! 'R-RAHMANI 'R-RAHIM.

هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَرْسَلَ رَسُولُهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظَاهِرَهُ عَلَىٰ الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ

“He it is Who sent His Apostle with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions”.—(The Qur-án, 9 : 33.)

DEAR BRETHREN-IN-ISLAM,

*Assalam-o-alaikum.*

In these few lines we should like to draw the attention of our Muslim readers to a point which is of the utmost importance for the welfare of Islam and the Muslims. The institution of Zakat, which is one of the fundamental principles of Islam, was established by the Holy Qur-án not only as an act of individual charity, but also as a matter of national concern. The Zakat or the legal fortieth of all the personal amassings was collected by the Holy Prophet and his successors as a part of the national treasury and applied to various purposes specified by the Holy Qur-án and best suited to the national welfare of the Muslim Community.

To our great misfortune, this prime source of our national wealth and strength has now almost gone dry by its misuse and, instead of this great volume of permanent income being used, as originally intended, to make the whole community flourish, we have only a few individual acts which ‘lose themselves in the sand.’ This highly organised system of Islam has so degenerated that before Rajab comes, thousands of professional beggars, who can easily earn their living by the sweat of their brow, get out of their houses and spread from one corner of the country to the other to beg for Zakat, thus cheating the Muslim Public under a cloak of piety,—a state of things never contemplated by Islam. The principle of Zakat was meant really to uplift the Community of Islam and not to turn it into a nation of beggars.

The Zakat is generally calculated and distributed by the Muslims in the sacred month of Rajab. If the Zakat may properly be collected and used, it would meet our various needs. Great stress has been laid by the Holy Qur-án and the Prophet (May the peace of Allah be upon his soul) upon the institution of Zakat, and the Book lays down some eight objects to which Zakat should be applied. The sacred words are :—

“Alms are only for the poor and the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are made to incline



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(to truth) and the (ransoming of) captives and those in debt and in the way of Allah and the wayfarer : an ordinance from Allah ; and Allah is Knowing, Wise.”—(Holy Qur-án, 9 : 60.)

Among the eight items of expenditure of Zakat explicitly mentioned in the Holy Book, one item is the wages of “the officials appointed over them” which clearly indicates that the Holy Qur-án requires the Zakat to be collected in the Bait-ul-Mal. The Holy Words show that 3/8 of the Zakat, *i.e.*, 3rd, 4th, and 7th items should go towards the propagation of Islam and its defence against enemies, and to this we should like to invite your attention particularly. Propagation of Islam is the greatest national need of the Muslims all over the world. It is much to be deplored that one finds over and over again instances of missionaries and other Christian teachers wilfully misrepresenting our Faith to the World. The Holy Prophet of Islam is being deformed before our eyes. Under the circumstances it would be quite in the fitness of things that a greater portion of the Zakat should be spent on this object, *i.e.*, to put the correct version of Islam before the World. There are good many restless souls in the world who are eager to accept Islam. We can do wonders within a short time if we have enough of money to distribute Islamic literature broadcast. The whole world is thirsting for Islam, if the Muslims were only to make up their minds to convey the blissful message of peace and amity to the farthest ends of the world. This can be easily done if our Muslim Brethren should realize the importance of the institution and obey the injunctions of the Holy Qur-án with regard to the payment of Zakat for strengthening the funds for the propagation of Islam.

Need we say that our Missionary activities at Woking, England, have proved to be most successful of all the other movements that we (the Muslims) have undertaken within the last quarter of a century to serve Islam, while our political activities have been baffled by others. The best way to preach Islam in Europe is dissemination of Muslim literature, and in this respect our efforts so far have met with entire success.

Hence, we are encouraged to place before you the claims of the Woking Muslim Mission, England, on your Zakat. We can say, without fear of contradiction, that this Mission is carrying on the work of the propagation of Islam on the largest scale in the world. The Mission has turned out the most useful and most convincing literature. It has been sending the *Islamic Review* to thousands of libraries in England, America, Africa, Australia, China and Japan, free of charge. It has been publishing thousands of tracts and pamphlets for the furtherance of the cause of Islam and for defending the honour of the Prophet. It has been establishing good many distributing centres for the Islamic literature all over the world. Its Missionaries have regularly been working in England. We would, therefore, request you to kindly see that